Seaward 25

***Simon Everett** takes to the choppy seas of the Solent to review a new version of a classic pilot boat with a proven formula for success – the Seaward 25…*

PRICE AS TESTED: £124,021 **LENGTH:** 7.74m **MAX PERSONS:** 10 **CONTACT:** The Boat Development Co. Ltd - 01983 280333

PBR TEST REPORT

THE OLD-FASHIONED values of seakeeping and handling are as valuable today as ever, so on a wild and woolly day out in the western Solent, the comfortable ride of the Seaward 25 proved its worth and I was glad to be tucked up inside the sturdy wheelhouse with its removable cockpit tent, isolated from the inhospitable elements raging against the exterior.

The hull and accommodation profile are straight from the Nelson pilot boats, which have proved their capability in rough seas over several decades. Such a pedigree is rare, but so too is the traditional fit-out, with time-served shipwrights wielding chisels and planes to produce the wonderfully esoteric interior, which has benefited from a few adjustments over the years, like the new cockpit seating arrangement with a higher back to the stern sofa and armrests each side. The sturdy, twin-leg, extending-leaf table is retained, as are the sound-insulated engine boxes that act both as additional seating and boarding steps.

In the wheelhouse, the main bulkhead has been altered to provide a more convenient companionway – a sliding hatch replaces the previous fixed cover, which makes a larger opening that provides standing headroom at

the galley. The dash facia has been given a refresh too, with a large, flat area that can accommodate all the electronics flush-mounted ahead of the adjustable ship's wheel, so the helm is neat and fully appointed. It is comfortable too – with an adjustable seat and an adjustable footrest there is no need to contort yourself for your stint at the wheel, whether seated or standing. Unlike American boats, and many British boats now too, the helm is on the port side in a proper manner, because boats pass port to port and it makes sense to have the wheel where the helmsman can see clearly to pass. For those standing around in the wheelhouse, the deckhead has been raised 2 inches to provide full standing headroom for taller people.

Heading down below, the cabin saloon has been treated to a deeper backrest for the settees, making the seating far more

Able to maintain a good pace even in rough conditions. That is one of the hallmarks of the Seaward.

While tearing around at speed is great fun, there is something special about the more sedate progress of the Seaward ...

Elegant lines atop a solid hull. The cockpit tent can be kept up at all speeds and in all weathers.

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 7.74m (25' 5")
LWL: 6.70m (22' 1")
Beam: 2.69m (8' 10")
Draught: 0.673m (2' 5")
Dry displacement: 3.0 tonnes

PERFORMANCE

RPM	Speed*
800	4.0
1000	5.4
1500	7.7
2000 plane	10.2
2250	13.6
2500	14.7
2800	18.0
3200	22.9

***knots as measured on Garmin GPSMap 78s**

PRICE

As tested with twin Yanmar 4JH4 - TE:
£124,021.93
From: £113,097.48

CONTACT

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in a confident stride through the western Solent chop. The industrial-strength rubber spray rail is in keeping with the rubbing strake and of similar dimensions, controlling vast amounts of water at a stroke. We were able to maintain a comfortable cruising speed of 18 knots in these conditions and managed a top speed of 23 knots on far-from-flat water. The beauty of the Seaward is that she does this without knocking your fillings out or leaping around like an acrobat.

Controlled progress with retained dignity is the Seaward way, and the twin-screw set-up is completely independent of each other, with separate stainless steel fuel tanks and lines and individual battery systems, but with linking valves or switches so that in a situation one can isolate a problem and keep running. The 160-litre fuel tanks provide a cruising range in the order of 200 miles at 15 knots or 150 miles at 18 knots, with a 25% safety margin built in. The turbo on the Yanmar 110 kicks in at 2200rpm, so by running at 2250 you are right in the most economical cruising speed with the turbo boost and peak torque to prevent the engine bogging down as you hit a wave.

While tearing around at speed is great fun, there is something special about the more sedate progress of the Seaward – like John Masefield's Spanish galleon it is stately and dignified with a

> I think she would rise to any challenge, limited only by the helmsman's skill or courage.

leaning towards traditional seamanship. You won't find any frayed ends on the warps on fender lines on a Seaward; they will be Wall & Crowned followed twice, or backspliced, in keeping with the expectations of owners of these fine vessels. The new Seaward 25 E14 is built on a successful formula that has stood the test of time – all the Seawards ever built are still in service, and with a healthy order book it shows that this iconic British motor yacht is still highly regarded by those who place solid seakeeping, safety and comfort ahead of racy looks. PBR

WHAT WE THOUGHT

THUMBS UPS
- Bomb proof, traditional construction
- Twin engines gives precise, easy handling
- Top quality fittings throughout
- Canvass cockpit enclosure

THUMBS DOWN
- Wet ride
- Space taken up by engine boxes in cockpit